CANADIAN MOVING PICTURE

Digest

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THE BARNEY BALABAN STORY

WHEN Israel and Goldie Balaban came to America from Kiev, Russia, in 1881, little did they as immigrants know that on June 8th, 1887, a son would be born to them, in Chicago, Ill., whose name, Barney Balaban, would become world-famous in a world-wide industry. In 1881 there was not even an Infant Motion Picture Industry. Motion Pictures were in the Realm of the Imagination, and it was not until 1904 that "The Great Train Robbery" made Motion Picture History.

In April, 1922, Terry Ramsaye published a series of articles in Photoplay Magazine, of which he was the author and publisher; and in a December publication of the magazine, he reported that the Prince of Wales was the first screen personality, being photographed in 1901.

Adolph Zukor and Mae Murray are presented in this December issue, Mae Murray known as Marie, the original Phoebe Snow of the then famous Lackawanna Railroad advertising. Mae Murray was a photographer's model and Ramsaye reports that it was her connection with the railroad which provided the inspiration for "The Great Train Robbery", an advertisement for which appeared in Billboard, Oct. 15th, 1904.

Managed a Nickelodeon

It was in the latter period that store-shows came into operation, following the peep-shows; and in 1907, Barney Balaban became the manager of a nickelodeon, but he retained his job as clerk with a cold storage company, in order to add the security of a weekly pay envelope to his motion picture venture.

Barney Balaban's introduction to Motion Pictures was at the age of twenty, but prior to this age, he had been employed as a Western Union messenger boy, for he was the first of eight children born to Israel and Goldie Balaban, and at an early age he left school to help out the family budget.

BARNEY BALABAN, PRESIDENT OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES, INC.

"In one generation, our family moved from steerage to distinction"
— Cardinal Spellman quotes from Balaban story.

In 1908, Barney and four of his brothers pooled their resources and acquired the Kedzie in Chicago, Barney's first theatre. The Kedzie was the typical store-show, an old store with the counter ripped out, 100 loose camp chairs, a projection machine in the rear of the store and a bedsheet for a screen. There was no ventilation, and the first thing Barney did to improve his theatre operation was the installation of a junk ventilating fan to blow air into the store. At this point I pause to relate that Barney Balaban is credited with being the originator of cooling and air-conditioning equipment for theatres, a development which made possible year-round motion picture operation and helped to solve the problem of summer business.

In 1917, in Chicago, at the Central Park Theatre, Barney Balaban installed the air-conditioning service, the inspiration for which may be traced to his earlier experiences in the field of refrigeration.

Back to 1908 and the Kedzie, Barney Balaban, having provided his customers with sufficient fresh air to keep them comfortable inside the store-show, proceeded to raise the floor in order to provide a better view. The show lasted nine minutes and consisted of four or five comedies. Barney's next move was to eliminate the barker before the door and to silence the phonograph. A violinist was engaged at $1.00 per day, and later two more musicians were added, the beginning of motion picture orchestras.

(*Continued on Page 6*)

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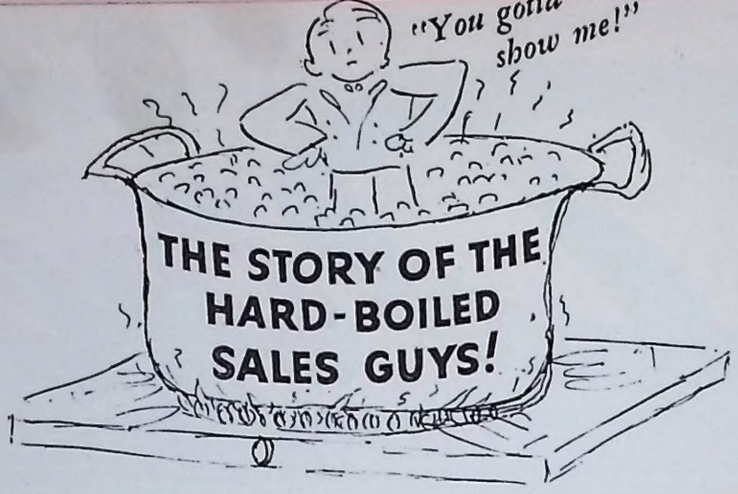
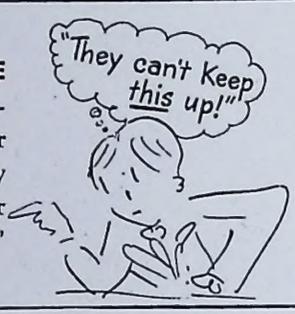


This is the composite story of the visit of M-G-M Sales Representatives to their "Preview of Product" in California!

"THIS IS HOW WE LOOKED WHEN THEY TOLD US ABOUT THE PRODUCT!"

"First came **'TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME'**—No wonder everybody's raving about this Technicolor Musical. It's sensational. The gay cast includes Frank Sinatra, Esther Williams, Gene Kelly, Betty Garrett!"

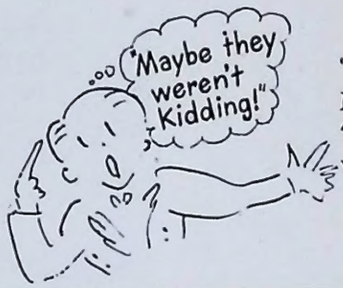


"Then came **'LITTLE WOMEN.'** Honestly, this is a Technicolor honey, a joy and what a cast! June Allyson, Peter Lawford, Margaret O'Brien, Elizabeth Taylor, Janet Leigh!"

"When they showed **'THE SECRET GARDEN'** we predicted it would be one of 1949's Ten Best. Great Cast! Great Picture!"

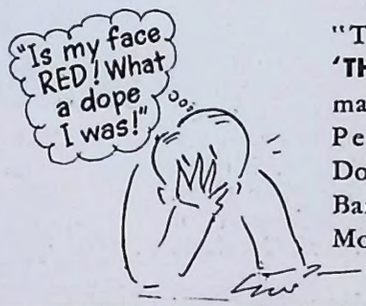
"**'BARKLEYS OF BROADWAY,'** Wow! Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers reunited in a rousing, tip-top Technicolor Musical. Oscar Levant is a riot. A Sure-fire hit!"

"Great! Great! Great! **'THE STRATTON STORY,'** a true-life dramatic romance starring James Stewart, June Allyson. Laughs, tears, thrills. It's wonderful!"

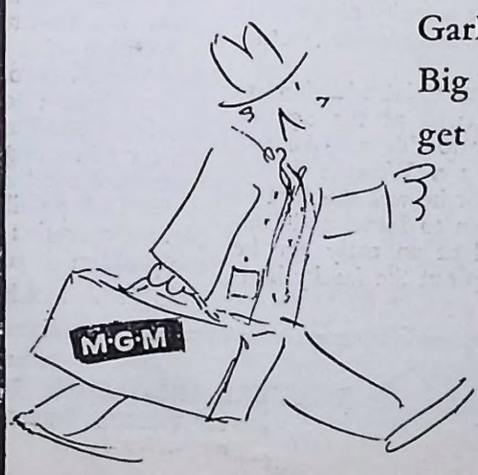


"Gosh! Another big, bountiful M-G-M Technicolor Musical, **'NEPTUNE'S DAUGHTER'**! Esther Williams, Red Skelton, Ricardo Montalban, Betty Garrett, Keenan Wynn, Xavier Cugat!"

"And still they come! **'EDWARD, MY SON'** is Great among the Great! Spencer Tracy, Deborah Kerr—rhymes with Ah! Broadway's No. 1 Stage Hit a Screen Masterpiece!"



"Terrific! Positively a gold mine! **'THE GREAT SINNER'** is the climax! Look at the cast! Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Melvyn Douglas, Walter Huston, Ethel Barrymore, Frank Morgan, Agnes Moorehead! Gosh!"



"And I saw others in production, Garson's new picture and Gable's and Garland's and many more Big Ones. I can't wait to get back to Film Row to tell my customers the good news. YOU'LL CHEER M-G-M's ANNIVERSARY YEAR!"

RAY PRESENTS

INTO the mail-pouch again to peruse the contents thereof, and I find a letter from L. C. Pearson, General Sales Manager of Dominion Sound Equipments, with a booklet which has been mailed to every theatre in Canada. The year 1948 represented an anniversary and milestone for Dominion Sound Equipments Limited and for its associates, for it was over twenty years ago, in 1928, that the first permanent theatre sound installation was made in the Palace Theatre, Montreal, by the Northern Electric Company, parent organization of the company to which we refer. Most of the personnel of Dominion Sound have been associated with the theatre industry in Canada for over twenty years.

The front cover of the booklet shows the front of a theatre with a line-up at the box-office, and the caption is, "The Show Goes On — with Dominion Sound Equipments Limited". The inside cover page presents a map with the network of Sound representing this company's service, and the following page cleverly presents a drawing of a stork in which the origin of Sound is the baby enroute to be delivered, with explanatory notes covering "progress through service".

The story of the progress reveals the employment of engineers trained and equipped with tools, test equipment, charts and reference books, the latter containing the sum total of the engineering knowledge then available to the world's largest communication system.

All Northern Electric Theatre Sound Systems were licensed to theatres under a policy whereby service was a definite and integral part of the license agreement. Spare part depots established as a part of the service policy and resident engineers located in the larger cities in order to efficiently operate the service from Coast to Coast.

Back of Northern Electric, the parent company of Dominion Sound Equipments Limited, is the Bell System, with its Bell Telephone Laboratories containing expert engineering knowledge, inventiveness, and the electrical equipment and telephones which make it possible for all of us to converse with the people of any country in the world.

The booklet points out the value of your Sound Equipment, how to protect your investment, how to prevent deterioration, how to secure a replacement of parts when necessary and how to maintain quality of Sound in your theatre operation through regular inspection and correction when necessary.

If you have not received your booklet, which you should have as an exhibitor, I am certain that you can obtain a copy by contacting this company. The booklet is interesting and you should have it available for reference.

"RED SHOES" is now in its fourth week at the Odeon-Carlton, Toronto, and is still the talk of the town. I am in receipt of a copy of the Sunday Sun, Vancouver, published Jan. 8th, and on the front page at the top of the page, covering six columns is a photograph of the theatre with its big flash on the presentation of "Red Shoes" and the crowds in front of the theatre bear out the caption underneath, "The March of Dimes 'Kick-Off' at Gala Premiere of Red Shoes Film."

The story which accompanies this wonderful front-page flash is as follows, "Like a Hollywood opening was the scene outside the Vogue Theatre last night, as a galaxy of lights played on throngs of Vancouverites who turned out to attend the premiere of the British film, 'The Red Shoes', which officially launched The Vancouver Sun's annual March of Dimes campaign in aid of Children's Hospital. Newsreel cameras and microphones recorded the event for those unable to be present. Meanwhile cans filled with dimes were pouring into campaign offices at The Sun."

All seats were sold out for the show. In the midst of the throng limped a little, 13-year old girl, a guest of honour. She was unable to walk talk or remember anything following an accident last March. Howard Booth, Pacific Coast Manager of Odeon Theatres, presented the little girl with a pair of ballet slippers as a symbol of her recovery. Laverne had been a former student of the ballet and said her first complete sentence, since her recovery, at the presentation, "Thank you, I like them very much". Congratulations to Odeon on this splendid example of Public Relations.

AGAIN in the mail-pouch, I find a copy of Time magazine, Dec. 20th, and on its front cover a very fine portrait in colour of Olivia De Havilland, star of 20th Century-Fox's, "The Snake Pit". Behind the beautiful portrait is the tense agitated and frightened face of a girl mentally disturbed, the expression carrying out the front-page line, "A lost day is hard to find". Pages 44-45-50-52 of this Time issue are devoted to a presentation of the story of "The Snake Pit", an analysis of same, and a criticism of its presentation. We are quoting from page 45 of this presentation. "Producer-Director Litvak, a strong believer in psychoanalysis, tells his story with great simplicity and sympathy. There are times when the simplicity verges on the obvious. But his best scenes are superb."

Another letter from Jim Cameron, Publicity Department of Famous Players Canadian Corp. Jimmy writes, "Just returned from a three-weeks' trip to Port Arthur where I did some work on the new Paramount Theatre, newest link in the Famous Players chain. I thought you would be interested in getting a look at the sort of co-operation we received from the local newspaper, The News-Chronicle. Despite the time of the year, with a special Christmas Edition which came out Dec. 24th, they certainly came through nicely for us, including a front page break twice and an excellent editorial on the 27th. (Page 6)".

In glancing through copies of the newspapers, I find on the front page, a large photograph of a Mrs. F. Steranka surrounded by a crowd, purchasing the first ticket for admission to the theatre. An usherette is presenting her with a bouquet of flowers.

THERE is a double-column story the caption of which is, "Film Head Here For Opening, Sees Building Sign of Progress". The story relates that John J. Fitzgibbons and other officials were present at the opening ceremonies of this $400,000 theatre. In quoting from Mr. Fitzgibbons' address we note that he said, "We are happy in the knowledge that we are able to put back a considerable portion of the money we have taken out of the Lakehead. As time goes on we hope to be able to continue to merit the confidence and patronage of the people of Port Arthur, not because we operate 378 other theatres, but because of the contribution we believe we can make by showing the best motion pictures available."

(*Continued on Page* 12)

Toronto and District

By BILL PRESS

UNOFFICIAL word from Ottawa is that the independent exhibitors of Ontario, headed by Ben Freedman, proprietor of the Capitol Theatre, Long Branch, are probably too tardy with their objections to the schedule of copyright fees for the next three years.

The Copyright Appeal Board, under Mr. Justice J. T. Thorsen, has already conducted the hearing at Ottawa for any objections to the proposed tariff for the Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada and judgment has been reserved. It is not considered likely, it is said, that the subject can be re-opened, particularly because of an understanding that the proposed royalty fees were acceptable to a committee of exhibitors.

* * *

Bearing out the argument that the public has been kept in the dark on the "Canadian Co-operative Project" of the Hollywood industry, an incident is related in connection with a meeting of exhibitors which was addressed by a Canadian spokesman on this subject.

"I didn't know there was a Canadian Co-operative Project. I didn't know anything about it," declared one of the theatre managers after listening to the off-the-record talk.

The reason for the hush-hush policy is difficult to understand when theatre men should be let in on the "secret" in order to make good use of co-operation promised by producing companies to boost Canada in lieu of government restrictions.

* * *

The tie-up of the Nortown Theatre with Shea's for simultaneous bookings in Toronto was a startling move in itself even in a situation where theatre teamings have become quite commonplace.

The semi-official explanation is, however, that the move, which includes the "isolating" of the Victoria Theatre, will help to reduce the backlog of pictures. Formerly teamed with the Nortown, the Victoria will have a double-bill policy for combined first and second run features. Manager Russ McKibbin of the Victoria is also showing a serial, "Superman", at the matinees.

* * *

Toronto merchants have been emphasizing a new style of red shoes for women in connection with "The Red Shoes" at the Odeon-Toronto. The same stunt has been effected in Hamilton with the playing of the picture at the Capitol Theatre.

* * *

K. C. Kerr, of the Iroquois Theatre, Petrolia, Ont., passed away suddenly on Monday, Feb. 14th.

After being lost for two weeks following a robbery of the Regent Theatre, Peterborough, $4,000 worth of admission tickets were recovered from the snow under an old truck along with an empty money bag which had contained $200.

Manager Gordon Miller said the rolls of tickets were intact. Theatre doormen no longer have to watch for the stolen coupons.

* * *

Toronto had its first Soviet feature in a long period when "Spring" was shown at the King Theatre on College Street. Critic Helen Allen of the Telegram commented that it was a pity that the Russians could not get as light-hearted in their politics as they were in this picture.

* * *

"The Outlaw" is said to have been withdrawn from circulation in Canada because of allegedly strained relations between studio executives in Hollywood one of whom had considerable to do with the making of the picture and is now with another company.

* * *

Not only is the handsome Humber Theatre located in three municipalities including Toronto but it is built on the edge of a ravine which has proved to be an architectural advantage. A sweeping staircase leads to the main floor below the level of Bloor Street while the balcony and loges are opposite the front entrance.

* * *

Manager Bob Maynard of the Palace at Hamilton played "The Countess of Monte Cristo" when an ice show was featured at the local arena. Stars of the picture include Michael Kirby, Canadian skater, and Sonja Henie.

* * *

"My Brother Jonathan", the first British picture to play the Downtown Theatre in Toronto, was held for a second week. It was shown simultaneously at three other 20th Century units, the Glendale, State and Scarboro, for the same period.

* * *

The headquarters of the National Film Board may be moved to Hull, Que., where a $2,000,000 building to accommodate a government studio as well is reportedly projected.

New Gable Picture First For Year

Director Mervyn LeRoy has launched filming of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's first production of the new year, "Any Number Can Play," starring Clark Gable and Alexis Smith. Wendell Corey, Scotty Beckett, Lewis Stone, Leon Ames, Caleb Peterson and Mickey Knox join the stars in front of the camera.

Arthur Freed produces the picture, based on the exciting novel by Edward Harris Heth.

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Arch H. Jolley, executive secretary of the Motion Picture Theatres Association of Ontario, has accepted an invitation to address the Optimist Club luncheon at Welland on Feb. 21. His talk will deal with the current film and theatre situation in Canada.

Canadian Cameos Get Good Exhibitor Response

"An unusual and interesting treatment for a news review" is the tenor of comments from exhibitors on "Canadian Headlines of 1948." Leading theatres across Canada have already played this first release in the Canadian Cameo series of short subjects.

For February release "Design for Swimming" finds the rare art of ornamental swimming delightfully illustrated in the first of the series to be produced in Ansco colour. A group of modern mermaids weave their spell into a marine ballet which includes underwater sequences and intricate surface patterns. The climax is an interpretation of Tschaikowsky's beloved "Swan Lake" ballet. Produced by Associated Screen Studios, the short was directed by Gordon Sparling, member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"Design for Swimming" was produced through the co-operation of the Mermaid Swimming Club of Toronto, and features Marnie Delaney, Dominion champion ornamental swimmer, and Doris Geldard, winner of the Beatty Trophy as outstanding swimmer of 1946.

The new Ansco colour film shows to good advantage in this latest of the new Canadian Cameo series. Six months' experimental work in camera technique and in processing of the new colour preceded production of "Design for Swimming." Credit for early success of laboratory experiments in new colour goes to Maurice Metzger, technical supervisor of Associated Screen Studios, and a member of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, a pioneer in the motion picture industry in Canada.

75.00

NOW, MORE THAN EVER:

IF IT'S A

Paramount Picture

IT'S THE *Best* SHOW IN TOWN

The Barney Balaban Story

(*Continued from Page* 1)

Many Firsts for Barney

In 1919, Barney Balaban built the Circle Theatre, containing the first motion picture theatre balcony, and installed the first organ in a motion picture theatre. It is not surprising that he would introduce music in his store-show, develop an orchestra and install an organ in the theatre which he had built, for Barney Balaban is a religious man, with a respect and a reverence for religious traditions and ceremonies, and as music has always been so closely allied with religious worship, music would be a natural expression in the life of Barney Balaban.

I remember, on one of my visits to New York, Barney Balaban was observing the Anniversary of his father's death, and he excused himself during an interview which I had with him, to attend the sunset service which was being conducted in a room, in which an altar had been placed, in the Palace Theatre-RKO building. Irrespective of where he may be on the day which commemorates the death of his parents, irrespective of important business which may be under discussion, and irrespective of the town or city in which he may be on these particular days, Barney will go to a place of worship to join in the Memoriam Prayers for the dead.

Many years ago, when I first met Barney Balaban, he was already what we term a Big Executive, but it is not the importance of his position whch makes him a personality, it is the warmth and sincerity of his character, the simplicity of his manner, his approachability, his excellent judgment in situations demanding a keen analysis, his sense of humour, and the fact that busy as he always has been, he is never too busy to grant an interview, regardless of the fact that the seeker of the interview may be only a small-town operator and not a millionaire partner, nor a so-called Big Shot.

To know Barney Balaban is to like him, for he is a likeable fellow; and it may give you a better picture of him when I tell you that, as an associate of Famous Players Canadian Corp., or of Paramount Pictures Inc. you will be treated as a member of the Paramount Family by Barney, providing you, also, are conscious of a family member relationship.

Father Confessor

Not one member of the Paramount Family is reticent about telling Barney his troubles, if he has any, and up every member's sleeve is the Barney Balaban card to play when all other aces in the hole have already been played.

I remember, on a visit to Paris many years ago, the anniversary of my own mother's death found me in the Cathedral de Notre Dame; I had forgotten to light the traditional candle in her memory, and so I purchased a candle in the Cathedral and, placing it upon one of the altars, said a prayer in memory of my mother. To me, irrespective of one's religious training, one's own religious beliefs, all Altars of Worship are sacred and blessed. I related this story to Barney when he told me he was going to the little room in the RKO-Palace Theatre Building, and Barney said to me, "Ray, I would have done the same thing had I been there on a Memoriam day for my parents."

Cardinal Spellman, on Sunday, Feb. 6th, in closing his sermon at St. Patrick's Cathedral, in which he execrated the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary, related the story of the coming of Barney Balaban's parents to America, seventy years ago, and although he did not name Barney Balaban, his reference to "an American of another faith, a Jewish gentleman" was easily traceable by the story related.

Cardinal Spellman was quoting from a speech delivered by Barney at a labor-management luncheon of the American Heritage Foundation in New York, Dec. 30th. Cardinal Spellman attended the luncheon and later requested a copy of Barney Balaban's speech.

Cardinal Spellman Quotes

"In closing my pleas for your prayers and protests on behalf of Cardinal Mindszenty", said Cardinal Spellman, "let me tell you a story that will, I believe, touch your hearts just as it touched a spark within my own when first I heard it. It is a story that I heard told by an American of another faith, a Jewish gentleman whose parents emigrated from a country which was then, as now it is again, held in bondage. "My parents came to these shores about seventy years ago, this gentleman said. They left behind them an old world filled with bitter hatreds and ruled by despotism. Here they found a new world filled with wondrous things — freedom, justice, opportunity, kindliness. Not things which you could touch or eat but, when you've never had them before, things that are more real than a pair of shoes or even a loaf of bread. As long as they lived they never stopped wondering at the glory of America. They were two of the best Americans I've ever known. "Seventy years ago they came here with nothing but the clothes on their backs and great courage. Today their little boy is speaking before a gathering of the leaders of America. In one generation our family moved from steerage to distinction. That's not one man's story, it is the American story. Multiply it a million times or more for every race, creed and color and you begin to sense the miracle of America". Cardinal Spellman concluded his sermon with, "And this, my friends, is the America I beg Americans to save."

Bill of Rights to Library

A collection of American historical documents is one of Barney Balaban's hobbies and, in 1945, he presented the Library of Congress with the original Bill of Rights, filling the last gap in the national collection. A Bill of Rights, the original, drawn up by the Fathers of the United States, would appeal to any man, particularly to one whose parents came from Kiev, Russia, the Russia under whose Czars Kiev had experienced pogroms in which human rights had been massacred and desecrated.

I am glad to know that it was Barney Balaban, the son of those immigrant parents of 1881, who gave to the Library of Congress of the great Republic of the United States, the original copy of a Bill of Rights, to have, to hold, and to perpetuate.

In 1947, Barney Balaban became one of the original organizers of the American Heritage Foundation, sponsors of the Freedom Train program. As a member of its Board of Trustees and as Chairman of its Finance Committee, he has been in the active leadership of the development of this highly successful patriotic endeavor.

But Barney Balaban does not restrict his patriotism, nor his philanthropic contributions to any rule of human behavior or interest, for each Christmas I am in receipt of a card from Mr. and Mrs. Barney Balaban, and an acknowledgment from a Philanthropy or Charity, that Mr. and Mrs. Barney Balaban have made a contribution in my name. It is a wonderful way of being remembered, for I am made a present of a MITZVAH, (a blessing) for which I am grateful.

(*Continued on Page 7*)

PARAMOUNT STUDIO GATE

"Through these doors . . ." come some of the finest pictures to come out of Hollywood.

The Barney Balaban Story

(*Continued from Page 6*)

Having had previous experience with my biographies, you are prepared for the introduction of personal reminiscences and stories, therefore I make no apologies for their introduction, but blithely resume the Barney Balaban story.

Build De Luxe Theatres

In 1915, Barney Balaban, in association with Sam Katz, made plans for a group of deluxe theatres. Their first, The Central Park, which opened in 1917, contained the first air-conditioning equipment to which I have previously referred. Following closely upon its heels came the Riviera, Tivoli, Chicago and Uptown Theatres, the nucleus of a circuit now operating forty-five theatres in the Chicago area and sixty-eight in the rest of Illinois through the Great States Theatres Corp. In 1923, these theatres were consolidated into the Balaban and Katz Corp., but it was not until ten years later, in 1933, that Barney Balaban became identified with the production of Motion Pictures, although he was in close touch with Hollywood producers. As a member of Paramount's Protective Committee, and through his close association and connection with this Committee, he became active in motion picture production.

When Barney Balaban became identified with Paramount, this company was just emerging from bankruptcy, in 1935, but was still in a precarious financial position. When he became the president of the company, he put into effect a debt reduction and capital simplification plan which was, in a few years, to completely free Paramount of debt. We, who have followed his presidency of Paramount know that "keeping out of debt" is not a hobby but an obsession with him, for Barney believes in Security, Sound Financing, in being the master of financial obligations, and he has directed the operations of Paramount to keep his company's position in respect to Assets and Liabilities, always on the side where the BLACK FIGURES grow.

As the largest motion picture exhibitor in the world, he believes it is important that he see all the pictures that are produced and has a screening room in his home, Greenhaven, in Rye, New York, twenty-five miles from New York City, where he screens at least two evenings each week, two pictures a night.

Saw Power of Television

In a world that is, today, aware of Television, it is of interest to remember that he was the first motion picture executive to interest his company in Television. Those of us who travelled to Chicago as guests of his brother, John Balaban, for a Famous Players Canadian Corp. Annual Convention, will remember the Television studio and the exhibition of Television there; and we will remember that Barney Balaban advised the partners and affiliates of the Famous Players Canadian Corp. that the Canadian company would share in the benefits of the Television experiments and development.

The Paramount Theatre in New York City was the first theatre to show on its screen before an audience, a television broadcast recorded on film by a special process made possible by Paramount's engineers. By means of this process, the picture was shown on the screen within sixty seconds after being received on a television receiver.

Paramount operates two commercial television stations, KTLA in Los Angeles and WBKB in Chicago. During the War, the entire facilities of the station in Chicago were turned over to the U. S. Navy and utilized as a Radar School.

Barney Balaban was married to Mrs. Tillie Urkov, in Miami Beach, Florida, in 1929. They have two sons and a daughter. He had one sister, Ida, since deceased, a brother Max, also deceased and five more brothers, A.J., John, David, Harry and Elmer.

During his Presidency of Paramount, the company had two successive Academy Award Winners, "Going My Way" in 1944, and, in 1945, "The Lost Week-End".

Acorn to Mighty Oak

When you look at the photographs of the Paramount Theatre Building and the Paramount Studio, permit your mind to flash-back to the little store-show in 1907, with its 100 camp chairs and its bedsheet for a screen, then follow through to the Paramount Studios in Hollywood. Draw a mental picture of those parents who came to America to dream their dreams of opportunity, where every American-born son has the right to become the President of the United States under a Free Franchise of American voters.

Many of us remember the old slogan, "If It's a Paramount Picture It's The Best Show In Town". A great deal of water has flowed under the bridge, as it is said, since those days, and the bridge, for many, has since those days spanned continents; for others it has been a Bridge of Sighs. When the World Depression of 1929-30 levelled the financial structure of a World's Economic Security; when banks and industries, including our own, cracked open, and for millions of people the walls came tumbling down; out of the ruins of a debt-ridden film enterprise, Barney Balaban rebuilt Paramount from New York to Hollywood, in Canada and in all the countries where Paramount had motion picture operation.

In no man's country did Barney Balaban arrive in Pomp and Circumstance, but that he *did* arrive and do a constructive job is evident, for the operation of Paramount is on an even keel, and the Pyramid of its trade mark still points its heights toward the sky.

—THE EDITOR

PARAMOUNT HEAD OFFICE BUILDING IN NEW YORK

The nerve centre of the huge machine which, up till now, controlled Paramount films from producer to spectator.

FOR SALE

THEATRE CHAIRS

We now have a very large stock of excellent reconditioned (as new) Theatre Chairs. Quantities up to 1200 of a kind. Immediate delivery.

NOW — New all-steel construction spring-edge, highest quality Theatre Chairs available.

7500 yards of imported carpet direct from England and Scotland.

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Screen Reviews By Mr. Public

By STEPHEN VISE

"My Brother Jonathan"

TO a Canadian public weaned on fast talking American movies "My Brother Jonathan" may seem a little dull. It is a characteristically British picture, and its story unfolds in a leisurely way and with a great deal of understatement. As a study of English life it deserves to be mentioned with "The Citadel" and "How Green Is My Valley". Although it lacks the polish of these two productions it tells a beautiful story and contains some impressive characterizations.

Set in the squalid Midlands of England and covering a period from about 1890 to 1945, the story combines a doctor's protest against slum conditions with his devotion for a brother. A young doctor, Jonathan, forsakes a promising surgical career for a small town practice, so that his younger brother, Harold, may continue his schooling after the family's fortunes have ebbed. When Jonathan arrives in the community he is appalled by its inadequate medical facilities for the poor, and he sets out to improve conditions. His crusade is opposed by the town's moneyed interests, and except for his nurse, he finds that he must fight them alone.

Marries Brother's Widow

In the meantime, Harold marries a fun loving socialite whom Jonathan had hoped to marry. When Harold goes off to war and is killed, Jonathan marries his brother's widow, now an expectant mother, so as to protect the child. Shortly after he wins a court battle, by means of which the selfish interests of the town are forced to open their hospital to the poor, his wife dies in childbirth. Before dying, however, she tells him to rear her son and marry the woman he loves—his nurse. The picture begins and ends with Jonathan disclosing to his adopted son, just returned from World War II, who his real parents were.

Michael Denison, as the young doctor, is the film's chief asset. With a slightly drooping lower lip and an uncultivated boyish awkwardness, he looks like an English Jimmy Stewart. As an actor he is extremely sensitive and intelligent: he makes the character of Jonathan grow in the eyes of other people as they come to discover his ability to translate idealism into practical action.

Dulcie Gray, as the devoted nurse, who secretly adores him, is an excellent example of how little glamour counts when an actress has ability and an interesting face.

Ronald Howard Resembles Dad

Ronald Howard as brother Harold —a very model of a cricket-loving, prewar English gentleman—resembles his late father, Leslie Howard, so closely that his appearance is almost unnerv-

(*Continued on Page* 11)

"A Letter to Three Wives"

"A LETTER TO THREE WIVES" is a sophisticated comedy about wives and husbands, which should strike close to home for married people and inform those people about to be married of what they are getting into. One of the unusual twists in this six-part domestic farce is the fact that the husbands, instead of being indifferent to their wives' activities, are deeply concerned about them. The wives, of course, running true to form, are jealous and suspicious of their husbands, and in this commonplace crisis lies the humor of the story. Once well launched into the turbulent seas of matrimony the picture becomes progressively funnier.

The perpetrator of the crisis is Addie Ross, a mysterious siren whom we never see but only hear as she begins and ends the picture. We gather from the other characters that Addie has known the three husbands from childhood and commands their idolatrous respect because of her remarkable talents. One day, after their husbands have been acting strangely, the three wives go on a boating excursion. Just as they are about to leave the dock, they get a telegram from Addie, saying that she has run off with one of their husbands. The main part of the picture thus gets under way, in a series of three flashbacks, with each wife worrying about her respective husband and Addie's relationship to him.

Paul Douglas Steals Show

Jeanne Crain, who takes the role of a farm girl, and Jeffry Lynn, her society-bred husband, are convincing as a married couple. Ann Sothern as a breadwinning writer of soap operas and Kirk Douglas as her aesthetic schoolteacher husband show that they fully understand the tensions which arise from mixing marriage with a career. The biggest surprises, however, are Linda Darnell and Paul Douglas. Without ever relying on her beauty to carry her along, Linda shows that she can act the part of a poor salesclerk who marries her millionaire boss. Paul Douglas, a former radio actor, makes his screen debut in this picture by stealing the show at times. His spoken lines are exceptionally clever, but his funniest acting comes in the scenes of knowing silence during his courtship of Linda. Although he may not have the middle age dash of a Pidgeon or a Gable, his slightly grotesque appearance should take him far in comedy.

The picture was directed by Joseph Mankiewicz and adapted for the screen from a Cosmopolitan magazine novel by John Klempner. The picture was produced by Sol C. Siegel and is released through Twentieth Century-Fox.

"Words and Music"

"WORDS AND MUSIC" is a pleasant musical built around the life and music of the song writing team of Richard Rodgers and Lorenzo Hart. In many respects this picture is another extravaganza of Technicolor, stars, and music, representing what Hollywood believes to be a sure-fire formula for box office success. Yet on the whole it comes off much better than some of the trite and plotless musicals of the past, because director Norman Taurog pays some attention to the story of Rodgers and Hart.

Well-to-do College Boys

Rodgers, the song writer, and Hart, his lyricist, began as two well-to-do New York college boys. After their first show, "Garrick Gaieties", was performed at a benefit by the New York Theatre Guild, their success as a composing team was assured. However, in their personal lives things went less smoothly. Hart, a loveable but eccentric extrovert, lived his life as an unhappy bachelor, never getting over his first love for a night club singer who turned down his marriage offer. Always painfully aware of his short stature, he tried to compensate for it by running all over the country after women, smoking big cigars, and staging lavish parties for his host of friends. His friend Rodgers, in contrast to him, was a more average and stable type of man. After a youthful amatory disappointment (an actress thirteen years his senior tells him she is too old to marry him) he married a childhood friend and settled down to raising a family. But throughout his life he and his wife had to humor the lonely Hart and apologize to other people for his irregularities. The picture ends ironically with Hart dying in front of a store specializing in shoes for short men

Mickey Rooney Dynamic

Mickey Rooney, as the dynamic, sawed-off Hart, is one of the main reasons why the picture's interest is sustained. His shortness is continually emphasized. Without too great a strain on the imagination one can see a real life parallel between himself and the man he portrays. Tom Drake, as Rodgers, who at times acts as the narrator of the story, is a very refreshing personality, and one whose popularity will no doubt increase in the future. Janet Leigh, as his wife, has a beauty and wholesomeness about her which should also take her places.

Perry Como, who has a singing and dramatic role, possesses both the voice and the engaging personality to make him a rival of Bing Crosby. (Witness such songs as "Blue Room", "Mountain Greenery", "My Heart Stood Still" and others). Excepting Como and Ann Sothern, who plays Rodgers' first love,

(*Continued on Page* 11)

Maritime News

By A. L. FAIRWEATHER

A. A. FIELDING of Bridgewater, N.S. spent a few days in Saint John and had much to say regarding his visit to Halifax where he attended the opening of the new Famous Players Paramount Theatre. Mr. Fielding said that it was a regular get together of old timers at Halifax, among whom he mentioned Chief of Police Fox of Halifax, who used to be at the old King Edward Theatre, now the Gaiety at Halifax; Harry Cockburn, who was with Mr. Fielding at his Truro, N.S. theatre and is now Halifax's most prominent orchestra leader; and "Bill" Affleck, who managed the Orpheus, where the Paramount is now situated. Mr. Fielding owns and operates the Capitol and Avon at Bridgewater, and the Capitol and Bijou at Digby, all in Nova Scotia. Mrs. Fielding accompanied him to the Halifax affair.

* * *

It was of interest to Saint John people, especially those who are musical, that Amparo Iturbi, the sister of José Iturbi, was seen on the screen of the Capitol Theatre, Saint John, in "Three Daring Daughters", the same evening in which she played, in person, at a concert in the Mutual Concert Series at the Saint John High School.

* * *

Elections at the Annual meeting of the St. Patrick Society of Saint John resulted in two men well known in the Film Industry being elected on the Executive. F. C. Owens, chairman of the N.B. Board of Censors, was made 1st vice-president, while P. J. Hogan, manager of Paramount Pictures at Saint John, is secretary. Mrs. Roland Skinner, member of the Board of Censors, was elected a member of the executive of her chapter of the I.O.D.E.

* * *

George Heiber, manager at Montreal for United Artists, paid a brief visit to Saint John to collect his wife and child, who have been visiting Mrs. Heiber's relatives in that City and to take them back to their Montreal home.

* * *

Visitors in Saint John have been: the Green Brothers of Green's Theatre, Florenceville, N.B.; Messrs. Haines and Robichaud of The Frontenac, Shippigan, N.B.; and Colin and Bill Dansen of the Strand Theatre, Sussex, N.B. as well as Gordon Andrews and Ken Snellgrove of Moncton, representing General Films, who distribute 16 mm. film. The last-named two men were motoring and took their lives in their hands on account of the terribly icy roads following a recent storm.

The Mayfair Theatre, Saint John, is being looked after by Herman Kiervan, manager of the Regent Theatre in the north end of Saint John, in the absence in Florida of Mitchell Franklin and Sam Babb of the Mayfair. These theatres are in the Franklin-Herschorn chain.

* * *

"The Red Shoes", the much publicized and highly praised Eagle-Lion film, was advertised daily in the newspapers by the Strand Theatre, Saint John, in advance of its Feb. 14th date. Many societies and organizations have been notified of this showing, including the I.O.D.E., The Ladies Morning Musical Club and the Theatre Guild.

* * *

Wedding bells are in the air for two of the "Film Girls." Miss Doris Selick, for a number of years with M.G.M. in Saint John, is to be married on March 8th, to Sam Mendlesohn of Sydney, N.S., the wedding to take place in Saint John. Mary Coughlan, a member of the staff of Paramount Pictures in the Saint John office for some years, has set her marriage with Marcel Ledoux, also of Saint John, for March 1st. Miss Selick has headed up a number of committees for various events and was prominent in the wartime Film Girls' Patriotic Club. Miss Coughlan was also a worker in Film activities and distinguished for her skill in bowling. Many festivities are being held for the prospective brides. Regret is expressed that Miss Selick is leaving Saint John and good wishes go to both couples.

* * *

Gordon Stultz, booker with International Film Distributors at Saint John, has returned from Boston where he went for a health check-up and it is reported that Gordon is feeling fine.

* * *

The new theatre at Buctouche, The Roxy, will be opened on or about March 7th. This replaces the theatre operated by Harry Adkins which burnt down, and Mr. Adkins will be wished success with the new house. This and the new Frontenac at Shippigan are Quonset hut style and have side walls of fibreglass fabric which comes in several pastel shades and makes a very attractive appearance as well as being insulating. The operating booths are of concrete and measure up to the N.B. standard of rules, which is strict.

* * *

Excellent business was done by "North West Stampede" at the Strand Theatre, Saint John, (F. G. Spencer Co. Ltd.) . . . George Enos, projectionist at the N.B. Board of Censors has been ill with flu but is now back at work. George is most popular with all the Industry in the Territory.

Miss Blanche Harrington, revisor at the RKO Saint John office who has been absent from that Exchange through illness, is now recovered . . . H. Cohen, Manager of RKO Saint John, states that the wonder film, "Joan of Arc" will be in this territory, as a Road show, sometime in March.

"WORDS AND MUSIC"

(*Continued from Page* 10)

the other big names appear as excuses to perform Rodgers and Hart routines. June Allyson sings a cutely archaic number, "Thou Swell", from "Connecticutt Yankee" assisted by the dancing Blackburn Twins. Lena Horne exposes her exotic brand of sex in "Where or When" and "The Lady is a Tramp". Judy Garland sings "Johnny One Note" and does a song and dance routine on "I Wish I Were In Love Again" with Mickey Rooney.

Ballet Outstanding

The most artistically finished act is the ballet "Slaughterhouse on 10th Avenue" danced by Gene Kelly and Vera-Ellen. It is a colorful expressionistic affair about a tough guy and his prostitute girl friend, who are both shot by a jealous lover and die together on the bar room steps. Kelly looks even better than Fred Astaire when he was in his prime.

Cyd Charisse in the lovely ballet "On Your Toes", newcomer Betty Garrett singing and acting as Hart's first and only love, misty-voiced Mel Torme, and Marshall Thompson just about complete this heavily loaded cast. The story is by Guy Bolton and Jean Holloway; screen play by Fred Finklehoff. The musical numbers are by Robert Alton. The picture was directed by Norman Taurog, produced by Arthur Freed, and is released through Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

"MY BROTHER JONATHAN"

(*Continued from Page* 10)

ing. He seems to be a little too self-conscious of his father's reputation to be at ease in his role, though time may rid him of this uncomfortable feeling.

Beatrice Campbell, as the wife of the two brothers, puts in a competent performance as a free-thinking woman of the turn of the century, who learns too late that certain old-fashioned values have a place in the modern world.

The rest of the cast acted with varying degrees of success. The picture is based on a novel by Francis Brett Young, produced by Warick Ward, and directed by Harold French. It is a Pathe (British) Picture and is released through International Film Distributors.

RAY PRESENTS

(*Continued from Page 3*)

John Fitzgibbons was accompanied by R. W. Bolstad, Lawrence Bearg, Western Division Manager, A. E. Zorn, District Manager for Winnipeg, and Jules Wolfe, Maintenance Staff. O. J. Silverthorne, Ontario Censor Board Chairman, attended. Charles Dilley, former manager of the Colonial and now manager of the new Paramount, introduced the speakers and Mayor C. W. Cox officially declared the theatre open. "A substantial contribution signifying an ever-growing city", stated the mayor.

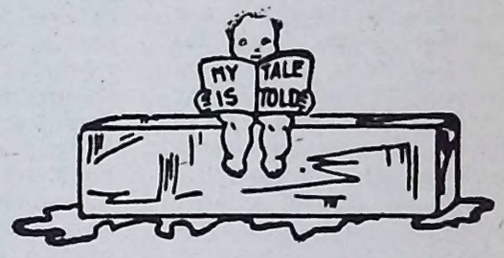
A copy of The Elstree Story, a most attractive story, published with photographs of stars, directors, studios and scenes from British Pictures, commemorates the 21st Anniversary of the Associated British (formerly B.I.P.) studios at Elstree, one of the most important film-making studios in the world. For nine years the huge sound stages of these studios have been dark, if not silent. The studios were requisitioned by the British Army at the outbreak of the late war and became one of the largest camouflage centres. Since they were returned about two years ago for normal use, a large civilian army has been busy reconstructing and renovating them at a cost of more than £750,000.

They are in production again, and when finally completed, will have nine huge sound stages, and will be, I am told the biggest and best equipped studios in Europe.

On one of the pages of this booklet is a photograph of Joe Grossman, Elstree Studio Manager and the author of a special story, "Red-Letter Days". I regret to report that Joe Grossman, that busy, energetic and friendly personality, who was the very personification of hospitality, and who was my special guide on a pre-war visit to the studios, died recently, following a heart-attack.

THERE is an interesting story concerning 16 mm. which A. W. Perry, Canadian General Manager of Universal, has sent The Digest, published on another page of this week's issue; and in looking over the list of pictures which do not refer to the 16 mm. deal, but Universal and Republic's 1949 list of pictures, the line-up of product has a box-office air about it which should be good for business.

Next week I am going to present the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Cavalcade of Executives, who travelled to Culver City for the Big Meet at which pictures were screened, policies introduced, all in line with the consistent policies which M-G-M has always followed. M-G-M became the talk of our Motion Picture Industry with "More Stars Than There Are In The Heavens" and looking over the names of executives, the heads of the various departments, the production, distribution, publicity directors, we find sufficient Man-Power to build an M-G-M Empire of Motion Pictures.



« Capital Story »

By WILL McLAUGHLIN

OTTAWA cinema-goers have been complaining of late about the mediocre type of feature screen shows during the past several months. In "Letters to the Editor", telephone calls and armchair discussions, the general feeling is that local first-run theatres are well behind other Ontario cities—and even smaller centres — in giving their public the latest and best of the Hollywood and British studios. One irate fan gave vent to his rumpled feelings on the subject by protesting against the policy of a popular first-run house in "playing to death" pictures of ordinary merit.

This writer also noted with what appeared to be satisfaction that the management had cancelled out dates on the Warner Brothers' "oldie", "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

* * *

Glancing over the amusement pages of local dailies gives the impression that Ottawa fans are not so badly off in the matter of choice screen entertainment. "The Snake Pit" recently opened at the Elgin Dual Theatre, where it will probably continue for a number of weeks. The Capitol is now playing "Johnny Belinda" with "The Three Musketeers", with which Bob Maynard broke all house records in Hamilton, next on Ray Tubman's booking sheet. Alfred Hitchcock's "Rope" is now showing at the Centre, and the Regent is currently presenting Gary Cooper in RKO-Radio's pleasing little comedy "Good Sam". Ingrid Bergman's "Joan of Arc", J. Arthur Rank's "The Red Shoes" and Walt Disney's "So Dear to My Heart" are among other top - drawer productions which will shortly play our first-run houses, and this list of current and coming attractions should satisfy even the most discriminating of cinema-goers.

* * *

George Degnon, public relations for RKO-Radio Pictures in Eastern Canada, paid one of his in-and-out-quickly visits here the other day. George arranged publicity for the openings of two of his company's pictures: Walt Disney's "So Dear to My Heart", at the Capitol; and the package bill, "She" and "Last Days of Pompeii", which is set to play the Nelson Theatre.

The Nola Theatre, originally one of the chain operated by the late P. J. Nolan and family, and more recently by Odeon, is to be converted into a one-story bowling alley. Rumor has it that Casey Swedlove, owner and operator of the Linden Theatre, is the man behind the project.

* * *

Members of the Chief Treasury Officers' Association were addressed by Robert Anderson, of the National Film Board, who explained methods of gathering information for the production of documentary films. Following Mr. Anderson's talk, members were shown two NFB films, "Champions in the Making" featuring Barbara Ann Scott, and a film on narcotics.

* * *

The Rialto, one of the capital's oldest subsequent - run theatres, located on Bank Street south of Gilmour, is apparently in for an exterior face-lifting. At the moment, workmen are barricading the entire front, leaving a small entrance so that the show may go on during alterations.

* * *

Bill Gladish, formerly of Toronto and now reviewing films for the Ottawa Citizen, was elected vice-president of the Ottawa Press Club at the annual board meeting held in the Chateau Laurier last week.

TRADE HEADLINES

Warner Brothers Net Three Millions for Three Months

●

MGM Will Make 33 Features on 1949-50 Slate Eleven More Than Originally Planned

●

Schary Reveals $100 Million Worth of Films Planned at MGM by Middle of 1950

●

MGM Will Retain Sliding Scale as Basic Sales Format But Drops Policy of National Release Dates

●

Academy Nominations "Hamlet", "Belinda", "Red Shoes", "Snake Pit" and "Sierra Madre"

●

Actors Nominated — Ayres, Clift, Dailey, Olivier and Webb

●

Actresses — Bergman, de Havilland, Dunne, Stanwyck and Wyman

●

20th-Fox Ready For TV Film Distribution Offering Releasing Deals on 30% Charge Basis

●

Warners to Produce "The Trial of Cardinal Mindszenty" as Quickly as Possible

●

Columbia Stockholders Approve Harry Cohn Pact Re-Elect Directors and Okay Increase in Board

●

Paramount Offers to End 71 Partnerships As Total Divorcement Decree Imminent

●

Eagle-Lion Seeks Exhibitor Advice, Gets Sam Pinanski, Veteran Exhibitor, In Advisory Capacity

●

Paramount Distribution and Exhibition to Be Separated — Dual Stockholders Forbidden

●

Support "Brotherhood Week" February 20-27

"Jimmie" Whitebone Getting the M.B.E. From Lieut.-Gov. MacLaren

At investiture ceremonies at Government House in Saint John recently, James A. Whitebone, projectionist at Famous Players' Paramount Theatre in Saint John, and a prominent member of the motion picture industry in the Maritimes, was decorated as a Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. The M.B.E. was also presented to W. C. McEachern of Moncton, shown to the left of Mr. Whitebone. "Jimmie" Whitebone's award was "for Meritorious Service to the Labor Movement." He has been president of the New Brunswick Federation of Labor for fifteen years, is vice-president of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, and of IATSE for Canada and the U.S.

Sovereign Gets 16mm Rights To RKO - Disney Product

Mr. A. W. Perry and Walter Kennedy of Sovereign Film Distributors, Limited, and Mr. Harry J. Michalson of RKO Radio Pictures announced the signing of a long term franchise by Sovereign Film Distributors, Limited, for the distribution of RKO Radio Pictures 16mm in the Dominion of Canada. As the result of an agreement just concluded, Sovereign will distribute in Canada, starting immediately, RKO feature film programs in 16mm together with appropriate shorts.

Included in the distribution deal between Sovereign and RKO are the Walt Disney Productions, both feature and single reel cartoon featurettes in Technicolor. This marks the first time that the Walt Disney product has been made available in Canada on 16mm. Included in the Disney features now to be handled by Sovereign are "Bambi", "Pinocchio", "Make Mine Music", "Fun and Fancy Free", "Song of the South", "Melody Time" and "So Dear to my Heart."

Negotiations were concluded by Mr. A. W. Perry and Walter Kennedy, representing Sovereign, and Mr. Sidney Kramer and Mr. Leo Devaney, representing RKO.

Mr. Sidney Kramer, speaking for RKO Radio Pictures Inc. said. "I have every confidence that Sovereign Film Distributors, Limited, will handle the distribution of RKO Radio Pictures' product in 16mm in the quality manner that these fine motion pictures deserve. I have long known that Sovereign represents the highest type of distribution organization and that our 16mm films will be handled in accordance with the established RKO policy regarding 16mm non-theatrical film distribution."

At the conclusion of negotiations, Mr. Alf Perry, President of Sovereign Films, stated, "I am especially gratified at the opportunity given Sovereign Films to bring these fine RKO Radio Pictures' films to the 16mm non-theatrical film audience of the Dominion of Canada. The 16mm groups throughout the Dominion have been asking for these feature films and I am extremely happy that RKO has the confidence in our organization and in our ability to do an able and efficient distribution job to permit us to be the means of bringing this excellent entertainment to the non-theatrical 16mm film field."

Sovereign Films also distributes in Canada, in 16mm, all of the Republic pictures, all of the Columbia pictures, and all of the Universal-International pictures. The addition of RKO to these others gives to the 16mm exhibitor the finest array of product ever offered, and makes Sovereign the largest distributor of 16mm motion pictures in Canada.

Vancouver News

By JACK DROY

A REDUCTION in British Columbia's 25 percent tax on admissions to theatres and other places of amusement was forecast as the Legislature opened. The heavy amusement tax was levied last year when the province immediately took over the tax Ottawa had lifted as a measure of relief for the taxpayers. Whether the tax cut would be passed along to the moviegoing public has not been revealed by exhibitors and the guess here is that it will not be passed on to the patrons. Theatre operators have petitioned MLA's seeking a reduction and will make a formal presentation to the cabinet next week. Slicing of the tax was indicated by reliable sources as a drive developed among private members for a cut in provincial taxes. The movement was strengthened when public accounts for 1947-48 were tabled showing the province had been left with a $3,600,000 surplus and, on top of this, the B.C. government is expected to go to the country this year, so show business believes it has a good chance of a tax reduction.

* * *

The power shortage is still with us here on the coast, but it looks as if it may be over shortly as it is raining now, (the first rain in 65 days). All B.C. theatres have discontinued midnight shows until the power situation improves.

Cupid is working overtime at Warner Bros.' exchange here. Two lassies announced their engagements recently: Jackie McDermott, bookers' steno, will marry William Gunn; and Marion Smith, billing clerk, said yes to Johnny Homenchuk. Secretary to manager Earl Dalgleish, Rose Innacone married Doug Isman a short time ago.

* * *

Lumsden, a Saskatchewan farming community, is now operating its first 35 mm. moving picture theatre, The Valley, a 300-seater, recently opened by Ted Grimes.

* * *

Alex Myers, doorman at Odeon's Circle, has been promoted to manager of Odeon's Kingsway, a Vancouver suburban house. He succeeds Jimmy McGregor, who moves to the Circle as assistant to manager Jimmy Adams.

* * *

Establishment of an amusement park in Central Park, a suburb of Vancouver, will be considered by Burnaby Council. H. J. Brissette, New Westminster, applied for a five year lease of three acres to operate a carnival, open-air dance hall, a swimming pool and an auditorium for film and stage shows. No decision has been given. The spot is between two Odeon Theatres — the Oak Burnaby, and the Metro in New Westminster.

Smithers, in Northern British Columbia, almost lost the town's only theatre, The Rio, when a serious fire threatened the entire business district. Firefighters managed to save the theatre, a 200-seater operated by R. C. Steel.

* * *

John Cooshek, assistant-manager of the Odeon-Plaza, received front page attention for his unique hobby. He collects railroad timetables, keeping in touch with all railroads in Canada and the U.S.A. to pick up new issues which, John claims, make fascinating reading. Some of his timetables go back as far as 1897. Cooshek says it's a wonderful way to learn geography.

* * *

Bill McMillan, Dominion Theatre doorman, is coming along nicely after a serious illness. Jimmy Stewart, who left show business, is back again on the Dominion staff.

* * *

The York Theatre in Victoria (the former Pantages), seating 930 and operated by David Theatres of Vancouver for the past few years, has closed for reported company re-organization. With the Rio in the same block also closed, this leaves the Oriental section of the capitol city without any movie theatres at present.

* * *

Bob Kelly, Odeon Movie Club supervisor for B.C., keeps up his interest in sport by being a soccer referee in the Vancouver district league on Saturday afternoons.

Winnipeg News

By J. J. CONKLIN

WHILE this winter has been the coldest in Manitoba in several years, the down town houses in Winnipeg have been able to report remarkable good runs in feature pictures. The Garrick presented Columbia's "The Black Arrow", from Robert Louis Stevenson's book; "Tap Roots" (UI), was good for three weeks at the Odeon; the Gaiety staged a two weeks' run of Warner Bros., "Two Guys From Texas"; and the Capitol, the largest seated house in Winnipeg, gave large audiences a two week's run of MGM's "Julia Misbehaves". The cold weather, however, seriously affected neighborhood houses. On Feb. 12th The Capitol started a second week of "Johnny Belinda", one of the most remarkable pictures seen here this winter.

* * *

Sponsored by the White Cross guild of Winnipeg General Hospital, a premiere showing of the J. Arthur Rank production, "Red Shoes" will be held at the Odeon Theatre March 10, commencing at 8.15 p.m.

Funds raised by the showing will be used to pay for services of a volunteer director employed by the guild to maintain its office at the hospital.

Entire proceeds, it was announced, will be spent for the benefit of Winnipeg General Hospital. In charge of the project are: Mrs. William Moore, convener; Mrs. J. M. Kilgour, ticket convener, and Mrs. L. W. Houston, publicity.

* * *

The Metropolitan Theatre, only downtown first-run theatre in the city staging special kiddies' shows, announces a new type of program for the show to be presented Saturday morning.

This show will be headed by a full-length feature, "Henry Aldrich, Boy Scout," which has been selected from the recently established Canadian Children's Film library.

The program will also include a Bugs Bunny cartoon, a Merrie Melodie cartoon and a Three Stooges comedy.

E. E. Newman, Metropolitan manager, said to the Moving Picture Digest that the national committee of the Canadian Children's Film Library, representing most of the social, civic and religious groups throughout the dominion, was making a great effort to select features which were ideal entertainment for children. Many of these pictures would be shown at the Metropolitan, Mr. Newman announced.

Winnipeggers will soon be seeing speed-skating champion Betty Mitchell in the newsreels, members of the Winnipeg ballet will twirl before their eyes and the events of the recent Trappers' festival at The Pas will come to life.

These are among the subjects of movie reels shot here by cameraman Felix Lazarus of Warner-Pathe Canadian News of Toronto during the past 10 days.

Moving pictures of the Winnipeg ballet, which he was shooting Friday evening, during final practice sessions for its opening performance of the 1949 season on Monday, would be distributed in the United States as well as in Canada, he said.

"These movies will help show our neighbors across the border that there is more than just snow and cold up here," he remarked.

Miss Mitchell will be featured in a newsreel showing her practising for the world's speedskating championships held in Norway Feb. 12 and 13. Shots of the royal send-off that the speedster got on Sunday will be included.

* * *

The Winnipeg Branch of the Canadian Picture Pioneers will hold their Annual Dance on Tuesday, March 15th, at the Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg, and plans are being formulated to make it the biggest and best affair they have ever had.